

# Children of Alcoholics

## AN OVERVIEW

### THE FACTS

#### Children of alcoholics:

- Are at greater risk for alcoholism and other drug abuse when compared to children of nonalcoholics,
- Face greater physical and mental health concerns (specifically depression and anxiety) than children of non-alcoholics;
- Have greater difficulty in school; and
- Have greater difficulty with abstract and conceptual reasoning.

### Know the following signs<sup>2</sup>

**Guilt:** may feel like they are the reason for parents' alcohol/drug use

**Anxiety:** fear of arguments and/or uncertainty creates constant worry and emotional hyper vigilance.

**Embarrassment:** may feel ashamed of the family "secret" which may cause them to withdraw from others

**Confusion:** unpredictability in the family life causes uncertainty in other situations

**Inability to trust:** repeated disappointments and broken promises make it difficult to trust and develop close bonds with others

**Anger:** may be a result of resentment toward the drinking parent. Most often anger is projected on to innocent people

**Depression:** feelings of loneliness and helplessness are common

#### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> "COA: Important Facts." COA: Important Facts. National Association for Children of Alcoholics, Aug. 1998. [www.nacoa.net/impfacts.htm](http://www.nacoa.net/impfacts.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Turney, Lisa. "Children of Alcoholics: How to Help When a Parent Has a Problem." Children of Alcoholics: How to Help When a Parent Has a Problem. Do It Now Foundation, July 2007. [www.doitnow.org/pages/808.html](http://www.doitnow.org/pages/808.html)